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Facts about ORANGEBURG FARMS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FARM SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

JUN 30 1937
U. S. Department of Agriculture

LOCATION: About five miles from Orangeburg, S. C., which is 46 miles from Columbia, the state capital. Most of the land is in the northeast corner of Orangeburg County and a small part is in adjacent Calhoun County, southeastern South Carolina. Project headquarters: Orangeburg, S.C.

HISTORY OF PROJECT: Initiated by the Resettlement Administration, and developed by the Farm Security Administration of the Department of Agriculture. The first options for land purchase were accepted by the Resettlement Administration the latter part of 1936, and purchase of several tracts was completed in 1937.

PURPOSE OF PROJECT: To make possible farm ownership and a higher standard of living for tenants who were nearly destitute and who could not otherwise buy farms. The county's large Negro population and high percentage of tenancy made the location desirable for a Negro project. The 1935 Census showed that Orangeburg County had the largest number of Negro farm operators in the state (3,077, or 41 percent of the total 7,538 farm operators) but Orangeburg County ranks third in full ownership among Negro farmers. Because of the high percentage of tenancy in the County, the project has been expanded to include white families as well as Negro.

ECONOMIC OPERATION OF PROJECT: The farms are two- and three-horse units, vary in size from 48 to 156 acres, depending on the percentage of cultivable land.

The project area totals 6,403 acres. The land is predominantly a sandy loam type and highly productive. Orangeburg County, in the upper coastal plains of South Carolina, is listed by the Department of Agriculture as one of the 26 best agricultural counties in the United States. Little terracing and erosion control were found necessary but drainage was required in some places.

Each of the 67 farm units has a 4- or 5-room frame house, a barn, smokehouse, poultry house and privy. Forty-three of these farms are occupied by Negro farmers and 23 by white farmers.

All the homesteaders grow varied food and feed crops to enable them to live at home and raise sufficient cash crops to meet their other needs. Each follows a farm and home management plan to improve his living standard and to make possible

progress toward security and home ownership.

Little livestock was owned by the families when they came on the project but at the beginning of 1939, all families had one or more cows; most of the families had chickens, the flocks averaging 15 hens, and homesteaders had made a good start in raising hogs for meat and market.

Principal crops grown are cotton, corn, peas, sweet potatoes, sorghum and a wide variety of vegetables. Records show that 42 Negro families, canned 15,432 quarts of fruits and vegetables with the help of pressure cookers during their first year on the project. Those same families had canned a total of 65 quarts before acceptance on the project in 1937. Supplemental cash income is obtained to some extent by sale of vegetables to the South Carolina College for Negroes, located at Orangeburg.

Community buildings have been constructed, including vocational and health units on the grounds of the existing school for Negroes. An auditorium has been built on the grounds of the white school. Park and playground space is set aside for recreational purposes. A community nursery also provides homesteaders with shrubs and plants for landscaping their own units.

The health needs of the community are served by a part-time nurse who cooperates with the county health officer in arranging typhoid, venereal disease, diphtheria and other special clinics. The county health officer has commented favorably on the general interest and attendance shown by homesteaders.

HOMESTEADERS:

Selection of families was made from applicants in Orangeburg and adjacent counties, with preference given those families occupying land purchased for the project. Only reliable families with a farming background were selected. In most cases, their rating was checked with local citizens and officials. All 43 of the Negro families, averaging 7 persons per family, had formerly been tenants.

COST:

The cost per farmstead unit, including land acquisition and improvement, construction of dwelling, barn, smokehouse, chicken house and privy was about \$1,600.

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June 1, 1939.

